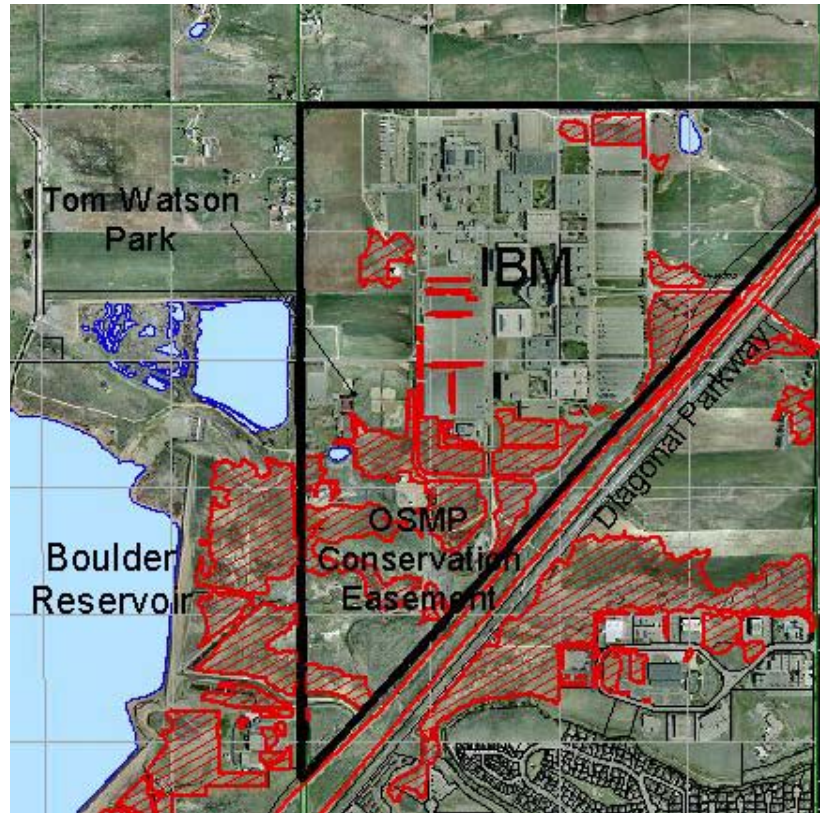


Colony #1a IBM/Tom Watson Park Site



COLONY DESCRIPTION

Colony is approximately 80 acres:

- Open Space & Mtn Parks = 27 acres (conservation easement)
- IBM = 40 acres
- Parks & Recreation = 7 acres (leased from IBM)
- CDOT Right-of-way = 6 acres

Condition of Colony:

- Area is highly visible from major roadway, to IBM staff and park visitors
- All colonies are bounded by commercial buildings, agricultural fields, major roadways, recreational fields, paved parking areas and unsuitable habitat (wetlands) ; opportunities for expansion into suitable habitat are limited
- Expansion of colony results in increased conflicts
- Colonies are dense and fragmented by developed areas
- Vegetation is mostly non-native
- Manicured and irrigated turf and landscaping on TWP

MANAGEMENT CLASSIFICATIONS/ACTION PLAN

OSMP Conservation Easement:

Management objectives will be determined and implemented in the context of the revised Prairie Dog Habitat Conservation component of the OSMP Grassland Plan (PDHCP).

Classification-To be determined

IBM Property:

Because this is private property, this plan can only convey a *recommendation* based on information available. In the context of this plan, preliminary recommendations are:

Classification- **Long Term and Interim Protection** in areas where colonies are compatible with current uses of the site

Classification-**Near Term Removal** in areas (landscaping and mechanical systems) where there are direct conflicts with current uses of the site

Cost-to be determined by private property owner

Parks and Recreation/Tom Watson Park:

Classification- **Near Term Removal** from ball fields, recreation landscapes and play ground areas, site mitigation and exclusion

Cost: (cost based on range of 50-150 animals)

- Removal through relocation-approximately \$6,000-\$30,000
- Removal through trap/flush, lethal control, \$9,000-\$12,500 for initial treatment (includes wildlife recovery program)
- Field mitigation-\$12,000
- Enhanced buffer/exclusion treatment (10-75 feet) \$10,000-\$50,000

CDOT Right-of-Way

This plan can only convey a *recommendation* based on information available. In the context of this plan, preliminary recommendations are:

Classification-**Interim Protection** in areas where there are no direct conflicts

Classification-**Removal** if construction or widening is to occur

Cost-to be determined by Colorado Department of Transportation

ANALYSIS FOR MANAGEMENT CLASSIFICATIONS/ACTION PLAN

Current Land Use/Zoning Designations of Properties

- IBM-Private/Commercial
- Tom Watson Park site leased to City of Boulder - ball fields, tennis/basketball courts and play ground
- City of Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks (OSMP) Conservation Easement on southern portion of site with no public access; OSMP has land management responsibility.
- OSMP lands were acquired after the Black-tailed Prairie Dog Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) was adopted and have not been designated as prairie dog habitat conservation areas (PDHCA), transition areas or removal areas.
- CDOT-Colorado department of Transportation Right-of-Way

Colony Conditions

This colony complex is among the largest in the service area. It is comprised of several different colonies. The area is fairly well vegetated, but most of the cover is exotic species, some of which are invasive weeds. Some native vegetation persists in this area—much of which was *not* occupied by prairie dogs at the time of field inventory (October 2005).

Landscape Context

Prairie dog colonies on this site were observed to be very active and described as expanding at the time of the field inventory. Bounded by busy roadways and incompatible uses on several sides, the colonies do not have considerable available habitat for expansion. The colony complex is located near an area with large bodies of open water (Six Mile Reservoir, Boulder Reservoir, Coot Lake), wetlands, prairie dog habitat conservation areas as well as grasslands undisturbed by prairie dogs. It is likely that some predators occur in this area.

Ownership

IBM owns almost the entire colony complex (74 acres). However, the City of Boulder Parks and Recreation Department leases seven acres (Tom Watson Park), and the Open Space and Mountain Parks Department has a conservation easement over 27 acres that gives OSMP management responsibility for that portion of the IBM property. The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) owns about six acres as right of way for the Longmont Diagonal (State Highway 119)

Nature and Level of Conflicts

The primary landowner does not appear to have concerns about prairie dog conservation over most of the affected property. IBM property managers wish to exclude prairie dogs from relative small areas of developed landscaping around their “global receiving area”, and from areas where prairie dogs threaten buried utilities and other “mechanical systems”. Although these conflicts are rated “high” in the UWMP, they are very localized.

The conflicting land uses at Tom Watson Park are more widespread. Public safety issues associated with encroachment onto play ground and ball fields affect the full seven acres of the park. In addition to the loss of playing fields and other public park assets, there are also concerns about the perception of a public health issue associated with plague.

Areas classified as **Removal Areas**, in this colony report, are areas where the presence or activities of prairie dogs are in direct conflict with public services/facilities or landowner preferences. At Tom Watson Park, prairie dogs are incompatible with the intended public use of this site. The ball fields have been closed and have not been programmed for league play because of the potential risks for injuries to the players. This site is not owned by the city but is managed under a Recreation Lease Agreement with IBM.

Areas classified as **Protection, Long and Interim**, are areas where there are no *current* conflicts, natural land management decisions have not been made and/or development plans are unknown or not anticipated for at least six years.